

CITY OF LYNDON – TOWN HALL MEETING  
Saturday, September 29, 2012, 9:00 a.m.  
Lyndon Community Center, 204 Topeka

Governing Body: Wayne Howard, Bill Patterson, Brandon Smith, Doug Watson  
Darby Kneisler and Mayor Kay Jones

City Staff                      Kimberly Newman, City Administrator  
                                        Julie Stutzman, City Clerk  
                                        David Wilson, Maintenance Superintendent  
                                        Darrel Manning, Chief of Police  
                                        Erin Burkdoll, Accounts Clerk

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Jones called the meeting to order.

The Mayor stated the special agenda is for the purpose of conducting a town hall meeting. The special agenda was signed by council members and the Mayor.

**2. ROLL CALL:** The City Clerk called roll call; all members were present.

In addition to the governing body and City staff, approximately sixteen community members attended the Town Hall meeting; see attached sheet.

**3. NEW BUSINESS:**

    a)     Town Hall Meeting.

Mayor Jones introduced council members and staff. Citizens were invited to take handouts which were placed on a table in the back of the room.

A power point presentation was presented by Mayor Jones and the City Administrator; a copy is attached.

The Mayor gave a presentation on “Year in Review” which included:

- ✓ The Pride hosted the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration which was held on July 4, 2012.
- ✓ The Super Mysterious Magic Show held at the Community Center on August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012.
- ✓ The Farmer’s Market held on Mondays from 4-7 p.m. which will run until October 29th.
- ✓ The Summer Movie Series was held in City Park this summer which included Cars 2, Transformers and Puss in Boots.

Topics discussed during the presentation by the City Administrator were:

- ✓ The City Administrator explained there was a mill increase this year of 2.04 mills approximately \$11,659. Each mill in the City is equal to approximately \$5,700. The previous year it was worth \$5,787 and this year is was \$5,717. Due to the valuation of the City going down, the City was in deficit by \$4,041.
- ✓ The City Administrator stated somethings the City has done to keep the tax rate down in the City is to pursue grants, bid the trash contract, reduced employee benefits, and reduced one position from full time to part time. On a side note, the Mayor stated in the back of the room was a trash schedule for residents to pick up for 2013.
- ✓ A brief discussion was given on the change in trash and the trash contract. It is the City's responsibility to be fiscally responsible and in order to do that City contracts should be bid. Ottawa Sanitation had the lowest bid and that contract will run for 3 years. Due to going out for bid, the City will save \$51,000 a year for a total of \$154,000 over 3 years.
- ✓ The City Administrator announced in the years of 2011 and 2012, the City received \$114,000 in grants which included the Bailey House grant for \$80,000, Siren Replacement grant for \$15,000, GIS Water and Sewer Mapping for \$4,000 and KDOT Safe Routes to School Phase I grant for \$15,000.
- ✓ In 2012 to 2013 the City has applied for \$373,000 in grants which include the KDOT Safe Routes to School PHASE II for \$250,000, KHF Healthy Community Initiatives grant for \$75,000 (\$25,000 over 3 years) for parks and trails, KHF Recognition grant for \$18,000 for intergenerational/senior programs, Community Garden grant for \$5,000, and Sunflower Trails grant for \$25,000 which would be submitted through USD421 for sidewalks along the Jones Park Trail.
- ✓ The City Administrator gave a brief explanation of employee benefits. In 2012, the City paid 100% of benefits for employees and dependents. In 2013, the City will pay 95% for employees and 55% for dependants. The cost per fund for employee benefits and salaries for 2013 was also discussed totaling \$410,000. Cost per fund for these were broken down for the residents showing the increase in mills versus taking benefits/salaries from water, sewer and trash funds. (see slide)
- ✓ The City Administrator stated the increase in the utility rate changes are not due to increases in salaries and benefits, however, are due to the amount of debt in water, sewer, and trash funds. In June 2012, the ordinance was passed to detail how the City would handle the debt in each account. On July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 the first increase of 15%, the next 15% increase will be January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013, and then 3% for every year after that. The reason for the increase was due to the funds running in deficit, concerns about growing debt, wouldn't be able to handle major

repairs, complaints about lines/roads/and drainage issues, and couldn't plan long range for improvements.

- ✓ The advantages to increasing the utility rates would create operating reserves, stop using current reserves to cover debt, create capital reserves for long range planning, automatically renew increases to avoid having large increases in utilities in the future, create a fund to handle the drainage issues and update the utility codes to be more efficient.
- ✓ The City Administrator went over slides with years of history showing the fund balances in water and sewer which showed deficits and what debts are associated with these funds. It was also explained that due to having deficits in these funds the reserve was used to cover these holes and thus depleting those reserves for infrastructure.
- ✓ The City Clerk gave a brief explanation of why the water billing cycle had been changed and how it made the City more efficient. The reason for the change was due to new technology where the meters could be read in less days and the City could bill closer to the month of use.
- ✓ The storm water fee generates approximately \$7,500 per year which creates funding specifically for drainage problems within the City. The ordinance passed states that we cannot use these allotted funds for anything else but what is has been created for.
- ✓ Safe Routes to School is a new venture for Lyndon. The City has already been awarded monies for Phase I and the engineer, USD 421 and the City will work together to submit plans for Phase II funding. The reason for the grant is to provide safety on walking and bike routes for kids to and from school. The Phase II funding is in the approximate amount of \$250,000. This grant will create a number of blocks of sidewalks near the school. The recommendations will come from the steering committee which will consist of members of the community. The first meeting of the steering committee will be in October for people who are interested in being involved in SRTS.
- ✓ The question was asked about the City's role in economic development. It was explained that the City works with local business, land owners, potential developers, works with OCED, and pursues grants. The question was answered as to why the City did not develop infrastructure north on 75 highway. The City Administrator stated that City did not own that land and that the cost would be approximately \$350,000 whereas the City only has \$80,000-\$120,000 for infrastructure and has no reserves to be able to fund this project.
- ✓ The sales tax referendum will be on the ballot in November which will ask for a vote by citizens on .5% increase on sales tax. The 2013 sales tax for the state will decrease from 6.3% to 5.7%. The ½ percent increase would generate \$50,000-\$60,000 or 8.75 to 10.50 mills. This would be used for general tax relief, 1% would be dedicated to infrastructure, and would start generating revenue in April 2013. The City Administrator stated it would not change purchasing patterns and gave scenarios as to why.

- ✓ Senior housing will bring 16 units on 2 acres. The City investment for infrastructure would be approximately \$50,000 - \$80,000 and would own the buildings in 15 years. Property taxes would be paid at a reduced rate of 65-70% due to being low income housing. The tenants would also pay all utilities. Housing is based on the developer submitting a tax credit application and the approval is unknown at this point but the odds are 50/50. The City's only role is to know what the cost is for infrastructure and set it aside and wait for progress.
- ✓ Local medical services are developing in Lyndon. Home Health Care is going to be located in half of the previous SRS building which will also add 4 new jobs. Other entities interested are Stormont Vail, St. Francis and local dentist. The City's only role is to be a welcome host as this is a privately owned building within the City.
- ✓ The Jones Park master plan was discussed. Jones Park in its entirety belongs to the City. The City's main concern is the pool is currently not ADA compliant. The zero entry modification to meet this compliance is approximately \$250,000 which is currently being delayed. The kiddie pool, however, cannot be retrofitted and has to be corrected almost immediately. As far as the proposed structure at Jones Park, there is really no new information at this time.
- ✓ The City has been working with USD 421 and the Recreation Commission to assess Lyndon's recreational needs. Some of the work includes updating the Jones Park Agreement and to update the Jones Park master plan which was adopted approximately 15 years ago. This could possibly include the proposal of a new amphitheater and nature trail.
- ✓ The City Administrator welcomed citizens to come to Council meetings every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays at 7:30 p.m. at City Hall.
- ✓ Arm chair aerobics will be starting on October 11<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m. at the Lyndon Community Center as part of the Healthy Initiatives grant for intergenerational programming and partnering with the Area Agency on Aging.
- ✓ The community Thanksgiving dinner is on November 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Lyndon High School from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- ✓ There are several groups who are working on planning Winterfest for December 1<sup>st</sup>. The City Administrator gave a rundown of events for the day.
- ✓ The City recently set up a Facebook page that will be used only for social events and all events happening in Lyndon will be posted on there.
- ✓ Other events coming up in Lyndon are the Reindeer Raffle on 11/5, holiday lighting contest from 12/1 to 12/24, community choir concert and Parent's Night Out on 12/8, winter wellness event on 1/13, as well as the return of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebrations and fall festival for 2013.

The Mayor noted if there is not enough time to get to all questions, to please write their questions down on forms provided on the table in the back of the room.

The floor was opened to questions.

**Q:** Walter Osborn asked if it was possible for the City to take over the sewer system. He noted that some citizens in town have sewer lines that run a block or more to get to a main. He stated that Jackson on the west side has no sewer system and no paved streets and the City does nothing for existing land owners who live in the City. Mr. Osborn stated his concern about residents on fixed income fixing sewer problems that run the length of a block and the cost associated with it.

**A:** The City has replaced and repaired some of the lines with slip liner to help alleviate issues. The City Administrator stated there has never really been any talk about it. One of the problems is due to not knowing the condition of the lines without using a camera to determine the conditions. The closest thing to see what we have is the GIS mapping of water and sewer lines. The City Administrator stated the Council should look at low interest loans to help residents with fixing these problems.

Watson stated this would fall along the same line as the sidewalk issue. Residents would like their sidewalk fixed and the City is not responsible for that. Landowners are responsible for repairing sidewalks and do not have the funds to replace them. He stated that City had talked about having a grant program or loan program to help landowners to fix their sidewalks and this could possibly also fall along with fixing line issues.

**Q:** Mr. Osborn asked about the downed limbs and why is there no place in town to take them.

**A:** Watson stated the City has to have a permit and the site the City provided in the past had been used for other things other than limbs such as trash, tires, etc.

**Q:** Hotch Hanna asked why the City cannot get a permit for a tree pile.

**A:** Smith stated the City does not have a site of land large enough required by the State to provide a site.

**Q:** Sue Olsen asked about future funding and plans for sidewalks and feels there is nothing in place for the future. She also stated the grants for fixing the sidewalks now is not free and does not provide funds for the future.

**A:** The City Administrator stated the City is working on a policy for sidewalk replacement that maintains the sidewalks over the long run. She also stated the policy would make the repair of private existing sidewalks 50/50

between the City and the landowner. The grant the City has applied for is Safe Routes to School which is for new sidewalks to and from school and does not deal with fixing existing sidewalks in need of repair. The Mayor stated the Safe Routes to School does not require a match from the City. Smith reiterated the repair of private sidewalks is not a grant and it could be a 50/50 match as stated by the City Administrator.

**Q:** Sue Olsen asked who will maintain the sidewalks that are going to be put in by the grant.

**A:** The City Administrator stated the City will because it is in the road and the sidewalk that will run down 6<sup>th</sup> Street belongs to the County which will have to be discussed with them. The Mayor stated the 1% sales tax is for geometric improvement and infrastructure.

**Q:** Hotch Hanna asked if there was money set aside for maintaining the streets that have been fixed and also for the ones that are in need of repair. He also wanted to know if they were going to be done correctly and voiced concern about how winter weather will affect the streets.

**A:** The City Administrator stated the City spends \$140,000 a year on streets. The Maintenance Supervisor writes a schedule every year and a plan by block in place which needs to formal so residents know what year their street is on the schedule to be repaired. The Maintenance Supervisor stated they had been sealing streets for the last week. Watson stated the drought has caused several problems with streets.

**S:** George Stutzman, who is currently the president of the Lyndon Pride, extended an invitation to residents at the meeting to become a member. He also thanked the members who helped with the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration.

The City Administrator stated that 35 people volunteered for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration.

**Q:** Maurice Gregoire asked if the City owned the machine that was sealing the cracks in the streets.

**A:** The Maintenance Supervisor stated that the City rents the sealer.

**Q:** Maurice Gregoire inquired about how much the City paid for the equipment to make the water billing system more efficient.

- A: The purchase of the equipment was in 2006 and it was not known how much the City paid.
- Q: Steven Zerr asked about the difference between the grant for sidewalks and the grant for trails.
- A: The City Administrator stated the Sunflower Trail grant requires a trail to be directly connected to an existing trail next to a school and is to benefit students and increase physical activity. The current Sunflower Trail grant application is to get a trail to go behind Jones Park which will be a primitive trail and is a nature based trail. The previous Sunflower Trail grant, however, was used to construct the trail that runs down 6<sup>th</sup> street from the school. The Safe Routes to School is strictly about safety and getting more children to walk and bike to school. The Mayor stated is the SRTS is whatever the Federal standard for sidewalks is. The City Administrator stated it is whatever safety dictates and that is why there is an engineer and that is why you have a community group. The engineer and the community group work together to make it safer and make traffic enhancements. Phase II is 2 years away due to studies and time to prepare the application.
- Q: Kevin Payne asked if there will be costs to landowners for the Safe Routes to School project.
- A: The City Administrator stated there would be no cost to landowners for the project.
- S: Kevin Payne made the statement that the reasons given on slide 27 of why the City should pursue the ½ percent sales tax is also the reason why the City shouldn't. He stated that residents will drive approximately 30 miles to find the lowest cost to do something whereas if Lyndon was the lowest sales tax it would bring people in.
- Q: Kevin Payne stated the City took a lower bid on the trash service, however, increased the City's costs on processing the bill even though it is more efficient being processed on the computer.
- A: The City Administrator stated it was because the trash fund was in deficit for the last 3 years. It was noted that the trash had always been the same; however, the City never got the \$1 per pick up per the contract because it ran so long. This decreased revenues and the salaries and benefits weren't even able to be paid out of the trash fund. The difference the City will get from the bid and is being charged to residents is \$2.96.

- Q:** Kevin Payne stated the City has raised 2 mills, proposes to raise the sales tax .5% in which the City is already getting 1% sales tax, raised the water and sewer rates 31%, cut a 1/2 position and decreased employee benefits which shows the City is accumulating a lot of money. He also stated that the budget is only down approximately \$4,000 which has been compensated for due to the City's valuation decrease. He stated that if the water and sewer expenses were to be averaged, those funds would only be in deficit approximately 40% a year.
- A:** The City Administrator stated that the loans have also been moved into those funds where they have not been in previous years. She stated the new money is going to be put into reserves for water, sewer and trash to cover approximately 3 months of expenditures; and will not be spent until those minimum reserve requirements have been met. As far as the general fund is concerned, it is only \$4,000 decrease in depreciation, however, there was no fund balance at all in existing operating budget which has been created.
- Q:** Hazel Atchison asked if the City was doing anything to encourage business to Lyndon.
- A:** Patterson stated that prospective businesses look at the central population of a town and Lyndon's population does not meet population requirements. The City Administrator stated the only thing that the City can do is try to help enhance what Lyndon has, create events that a chamber would do, and help bring people to main street. Kevin Payne stated that he has been talking to businesses about getting a chamber started.
- S:** Jayson Massey thanked the council for taking time to set up this town hall meeting and listening to citizens' concerns.

Mayor Jones thanked all who attended the town hall meeting for coming and stated if someone's question had not been answered to please fill out a form in the back.

A motion was made by Kneisler to close the meeting at 11:00 a.m., Patterson seconded, motion carried.

*Julie Stutzman*  
City Clerk